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STEPHEN D. COAN
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Heads of All Fire Departments

FROM: Stephen D. Coan
State Fire Marshal

DATE: October 1, 2009

SUBJECT: Timeliness of Reporting MFIRS Reports

Each year fire departments submit incident reports to the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS). These reports together with thousands of incident reports submitted by other fire departments throughout Massachusetts make it possible to look at the total fire experience, to identify our fire problems, to develop strategies to address these issues and to measure their effectiveness. In 2008, 98.6% of Massachusetts fire departments participated in MFIRS. Our data needs to be comprehensive, of the highest quality, and timely to be useful.

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) has requested that we submit and release all of the MFIRS reports by July 1st of the following year so that they too can make policy decisions. To meet the USFA's cutoff date, the Department of Fire Services must receive all incident reports by March 31st. This timeline would ensure that departments still receive our annual year-end quality control and feedback reports in enough time to make any necessary corrections or edits before we forward the data to the USFA. Then the USFA would be able to include Massachusetts data in their annual release.

I ask for your cooperation to examine internal operations to ensure that your records management system (RMS) permits you to meet the March 31st deadline each year.

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact Derryl Dion of the Fire Data Unit in the Office of the State Fire Marshal at Derryl.Dion@state.ma.us or (978) 567-3382.

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